

VZCZCXRO8364
RR RUEHDE RUEHRN RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHKM #1276/01 3080839
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 040839Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1921
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KAMPALA 001276

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [EPET](#) [SO](#) [UG](#)

SUBJECT: UGANDA: ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON'S MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT MUSEVENI

REF: A. KAMPALA 01055

[1](#)B. KAMPALA 00979

[1](#)C. KAMPALA 01196

[1](#)D. KAMPALA 01271

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Aaron Sampson for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(C) Summary: President Museveni urged the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to go on the offensive, said the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was "finished", and expressed support for revitalizing the Tripartite Plus process during a meeting with Assistant Secretary Carson and other senior USG officials on October 24. Museveni acknowledged the crucial importance of free, fair and peaceful presidential elections in February 2011, and dismissed concerns about the partiality of Uganda's Electoral Commission and the need for electoral reform. Museveni also discussed Uganda's relations with Southern Sudan, promised to "discourage" the author of legislation that would criminalize homosexuality from moving forward with the bill, and assured the Assistant Secretary that Uganda would use its impending oil revenues wisely. End Summary.

Somalia and AMISOM: Let's Get Moving

[1](#)2. (SBU) President Museveni met with Assistant Secretary Carson, Ambassador Lanier, Africa Command Commander General Ward, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense Huddleston, and USAID/Uganda Director Eckerson for two and a half hours on October 24 in Entebbe. Also present were Minister of Defense Crispus Kiyonga, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sam Kutesa, acting Minister of Finance Ruth Nankabirwa, Chief of Defense Forces General Nyakairima Aronda, and MFA Permanent Secretary Ambassador James Mugume.

[1](#)3. (C) Assistant Secretary Carson delivered a letter from President Obama expressing condolences for the September 17 attack on AMISOM headquarters in Mogadishu that killed several Ugandan soldiers, praised Uganda as central to the survival of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and assured President Museveni of continued U.S. support for Uganda's contribution to AMISOM. Assistant Secretary Carson said the U.S. is encouraging TFG President Sheikh Sharif to make the TFG more inclusive, more focused on service delivery, and better able to amplify its message to the Somali people. The U.S. is also pressing other countries to provide troops and financial support to the TFG and AMISOM, and is leaning on Qatar to curb assistance to Eritrea.

[1](#)4. (C) President Museveni said Uganda remains fully committed to the mission in Somalia, but that AMISOM's presence does not equal a solution, and the status quo cannot continue indefinitely. He warned that prolonged paralysis will

undermine confidence in the TFG and said AMISOM should either "move forward or get out." To this end, Museveni recommended increased funding and equipment for both the TFG and AMISOM to push extremists out of Mogadishu, Kismayo, Baidoa, and any town with an airstrip or a seaport. He said Uganda was ready to provide additional forces to AMISOM, and expressed confidence that with additional manpower AMISOM could push extremists into the "bush." Museveni also said the TFG should articulate an electoral time-line as a means of boosting confidence in the government and providing a political mechanism for resolving internal conflict.

15. (C) Museveni praised TFG President Sheikh Sharif - observing that he is young, flexible, willing to engage in dialogue without precondition, and is easier to work with than his predecessor - but said Sheikh Sharif needs a political movement to build an army around. Museveni was unaware of Kenyan plans to create a buffer zone in Jubaland, and agreed that this is a non-starter with the potential to further balkanize Somalia and upset Ethiopia. The President attributed the Jubaland idea to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi and said Qadhafi would like to break up Somalia.

The LRA is Finished

16. (C) Assistant Secretary Carson praised Uganda's pursuit of the LRA through the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR). He encouraged Uganda to accelerate development in northern Uganda, noting that the other side of military action against the LRA is developing

KAMPALA 00001276 002 OF 003

the north to stave off the emergence of any successors to Joseph Kony. Proclaiming that the LRA is "finished," Museveni said the LRA cannot return to Uganda and that the Ugandan military (UPDF) will soon finish the job if it is allowed to continue operations in the DRC and CAR. Museveni assured Assistant Secretary Carson that northern Uganda will recover and rebound from decades of war and instability.

Tripartite Plus

17. (C) Assistant Secretary Carson commended Uganda's continued rapprochement with neighboring Rwanda. He recommended revitalizing the Tripartite Plus process to bring together leaders from DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and key observer partners like the U.S. and the EU to discuss regional stability, security, economic integration, and development for the Great Lakes region. He noted that Special Advisor Wolpe is traveling to Uganda in November to discuss Tripartite Plus and expressed hope that Wolpe would be able to meet with Foreign Minister Kutesa. Museveni said Uganda and Rwanda have resolved previous differences over the DRC, and agreed that revitalizing tripartite plus is a good idea. He said Uganda's relations with Rwanda and the DRC are good, but that when they meet Uganda does not discuss anything beyond its specific bilateral relationships with these Great Lakes neighbors. There is therefore a demand for a reinvigorated Tripartite Plus process.

2011 Elections

18. (C) Turning to the February 2011 presidential elections, Assistant Secretary Carson stressed the importance of free, open, and transparent elections. He urged President Museveni to give the opposition political space and open the electoral process to outside observers to ensure local and international credibility. Museveni claimed the opposition already enjoys ample political space but, just like "terrorists in Somalia," has no agenda and therefore no

ability to attract support. Referring to the closure of radio stations and suspension of journalists following the deadly September 10-12 riots in Kampala (ref. A), Museveni said Uganda has 132 radio stations and seven television stations, and that Ugandans are free to hold political meetings at anytime and anywhere. He said the only electoral reform needed before 2011 is the computerization of the national voter registry to eliminate double registrations entered by the opposition.

¶9. (C) Assistant Secretary Carson said that an impartial Electoral Commission representative of the interests of the nation is critical. Museveni described the Electoral Commission Chairman as "very unpolitical" and said only two commission members were previously affiliated with political parties and one of these belonged to the opposition. He allowed, however, that there is a proposal to add additional members to the Commission. NOTE: Several members of Uganda's partisan Electoral Commission have overt ties to the ruling NRM party (ref. B). Opposition parties are demanding a new Electoral Commission as a prerequisite for participation in the 2011 election (ref. C). END NOTE.

Sudan

¶10. (C) Museveni asked the U.S. to pressure Khartoum to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and warned that "a lot of problems" will result if the CPA fails. Describing himself as a "victim" of Sudan, Museveni said Sudan's "nomadic" search for new mediators is an avoidance tactic and invited Special Envoy Gration to visit Uganda. He also recommended Gration liaise closely with the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Assistant Secretary Carson promised to relay this information to Gration. He also briefed Museveni on our new Sudan strategy paper and our commitment to the CPA. Museveni said Uganda is providing Southern Sudan with limited assistance, to include some military and police training, but that Southern Sudanese civil servants lack the capacity to effectively run a state and require urgent administrative and judicial training.

Anti-Homosexuality Bill

KAMPALA 00001276 003 OF 003

¶11. (SBU) Assistant Secretary Carson also raised the issue of "anti-homosexuality" legislation recently tabled in Parliament. The draft bill, which is not sponsored by the Ugandan government, criminalizes homosexuality with proposed sentences ranging from imprisonment to, in some cases, death (ref. D). Recognizing that homosexuality is a difficult topic for Ugandans, Assistant Secretary Carson said the issue attracts a great deal of international attention and that passing this legislation will result in condemnation for Uganda.

12 (SBU) Apparently unaware of the proposed legislation, Museveni said Uganda is "not interested in a war with homosexuals" and asked who was responsible for drafting the "anti-homosexuality" bill. When informed of the author by acting Finance Minister Nankabirwa, Museveni exclaimed: "But that's a member of our party! We shall discourage him. It will divert us." Museveni explained that Ugandans used to ignore homosexuality, blamed the legislation on western "advocacy" groups who call homosexuality a human right, and asked how Uganda should respond to the homosexual recruitment of young people. Assistant Secretary Carson noted that sexual exploitation of minors - whether hetero or homosexual in nature - was morally reprehensible and should be criminalized. Museveni agreed that criminalizing homosexuality between consenting adults "is going too far"

and said Uganda should instead focus on protecting children from sexual exploitation.

Oil: Uganda is Not Nigeria

¶13. (C) After closing the meeting and presiding over the ceremonial signing a \$245 million USAID assistance package, Museveni invited the entire delegation back into the Presidency to discuss Uganda's newfound oil reserves. Museveni said there is no chance of oil becoming a curse for Uganda because Uganda will use impending oil revenues in five carefully defined areas: (1) to develop durable renewable energy sources such as hydroelectric power; (2) to rehabilitate rail lines; (3) to support higher education; (4) to spur high tech scientific research; and (5) to improve Uganda's road network.

Comment

¶14. (C) Museveni was engaged and animated throughout the two and a half hour discussion, particularly when it came to military and economic matters. He repeatedly said that AMISOM needs to move forward, but stressed Uganda's commitment to the mission and willingness to provide increased assistance. Museveni was surprisingly out of touch on key political issues. He was unaware of the highly publicized "anti-homosexuality" bill, but provided positive direction once apprised of the details by the acting Minister of Finance and the Assistant Secretary. His dismissal of criticism of the Electoral Commission as much ado about nothing is less reassuring, as is his continued insistence that computerizing voter registries to remove ghost voters allegedly introduced by the opposition is the only electoral reform necessary for 2011.

LANIER